

MISSION-CAPABLE TRAINING RANGES

Marine Corps combat readiness depends on the continued availability of ranges and training areas that provide realistic, mission-oriented training. The Marine Corps Master Plan of October 1997 highlights the importance of ranges and trainings areas, as well as the need to properly develop and manage these key resources. The Marine Corps vision for installation and range transformation is contained in *Marine Corps Installations 2020 (I-2020*, April 2001).

A range specific master plan is in the early stages of development and, in support of that effort, The Marine Corps Training and Education Command (TECOM) recently initiated an assessment of Marine Corps-wide range requirements. The initial product of this effort, a Marine Corps Range Capabilities Document (RCD), will provide a set of unconstrained range requirements for accomplishing urgent and anticipated future training.

The RCD should be completed in the second quarter of FY-2004. In anticipation of its release, TECOM has established six cornerstone objectives for transforming ranges and trainings areas, including:

- >> Preserve and enhance the live-fire combined-arms training capabilities of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center / Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, 29 Palms and Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma Range Complex
- >> Recapture the MAGTF and unit-training capabilities of the Nation's two premier littoral training areas, Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton

- >> Leverage technology to support every level of training with a goal of providing timely and objective feedback to the training audience
- >> Honor our commitments to protecting the environment while preserving and enhancing our ability to conduct live-fire and maneuver training
- >> Ensure that our training complexes are available to, and capable of supporting Joint Forces
- >> Support the emerging Joint National Training Capability with the common range infrastructure and systems architecture to ensure effective Joint Training

Overall, the training and education continuum and the programs supporting it have the resources necessary to accomplish their mission. Regardless, there are areas of significant concern. There is an increasingly recognized need to make additional investments in range instrumentation, targets, and simulation technologies to upgrade and modernize our training. Current range complex configurations are not optimal for today's training requirements and our ranges may not be adequate for anticipated weapon systems. Of even greater concern, they do not provide sufficient unconstrained maneuver space for MAGTF training. All of our current range planning initiatives are aimed at addressing these concerns to assure our ability to meet future training requirements. The specific issues on which we are concentrating include:

- >> A MEB-level fire and maneuver training area

- >> A MAGTF (MEB-level) Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUNT) facility
- >> Improve instrumentation and feedback systems, and targets
- >> Mitigations of encroachment on maneuver space at our premier littoral training bases-Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton

The Marine Corps has made considerable progress in the past two years on the cataloging, assessing, managing, and funding of its critical range and training area complexes. The assessments of our complexes

for their capabilities, capacities, limitations, and encroachments are well underway. Progress has been made in assessing and quantifying the impacts of encroachment and incorporating those assessments into a comprehensive range management system. We have made small, but important, investments to initiate better range maintenance and modernization programs, and the level of support for the next program cycle will be significant. Finally, we remain aware of our dual responsibilities of providing stewardship for these precious resources and providing well-trained Marines that are ready when America calls.